

## [H. B. Thomas]

S241-[?] Dup

### FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER George Hartman ADDRESS 2638 W Lincoln, Nebr.

DATE October 18, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore (Nebraska)

1. Name and address of informant H. B. Thomas
2. Date and time of interview 1-3 Tuesday afternoon
3. Place of interview 1100 North 27th
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant None
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you None
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. Has none. Is visiting in Lincoln. [???

### FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER ADDRESS

DATE SUBJECT

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT H. B. Thomas, [SW?] Missouri—Informant visiting in Lincoln at time of interview.

1. [Ancestry?]

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2. Place and date of birth Knox County, Illinois, 1856
3. Family
4. Places lived in, with dates Illinois, 1858-1880; Kansas 1880-1882  
Nebraska 1882-1936; Missouri 1936-'38
5. Education, with dates Past the 8th grade - There was no graded schools in his time
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates Farmer-homesteader
7. Special skills and interests Farming-condition of country
8. Community and religious activities None
9. Description of informant 80 years of age and in still good health
10. Other points gained in interview Points about homeateading. An early settler and homesteader.

### FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

I live in Jesse James region in McDonald County, Missouri. Pineville is the county seat and people from Hollywood come up this summer to film part of the picture called "Jesse James." They tried to build the town to how it looked 60 years ago. They builded the town and had false fronts for the buildings like they had 60 yrs. The men let their hair grow and beards grow something like hill-billy type.

I homesteaded in southwestern Nebraska about 53 years ago. We went to land office in North Platte, Nebraska and got the papers filed. There was 5 of us looking for claims and sent to North Platte to see what land was free. We located on the prairies. The way we layed out out plans we had to get a corner that the surveyor had surveyed. We took

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our wagons and put a rag on the hind-wheel, had a compass to direct us straight south. We measured the size of the wheel of the wagon and then used a compass to go straight south and then counted the revolutions of the wheel to make 2 miles. We worked the spot where we ran to. We went east one mile and from that corner there was 8 quarter sections that you got from going east, then we went 1 mile west. There was two of us located. We had a timber right and a homestead right. We worked the corner 1 mile west. We worked 4 claims and marked the corner.

Our homestead was in Lincoln county. After we got the homestead ## we went back to Gosper where I was working there. We told your brother where my claim was and he settled on it. We drove yolk cattle down to our claims and put up a sod home.

We broke prairie, made our homes and settled. We found that we plowed on some land that wasn't ours. A good many old Union soldiers that settled on these homesteads. We had to live on our claims 5 years to get the land. One of the soldiers claimed that he had a harder time homesteading than he did when he served in the army.

We built our houses out of sod. We built churches out of sod as well as schoolhouses. I gave one corner of my land to the authorities for a schoolhouse.

My wife and I were the first couple to be married in the territory southwest of North Platte in Lincoln county.

We had Literary societies and one evening a Justice of the peace said that he would give a free pig and marry free the first couple, and I went over to him and told him I wanted the pig. So I got the pig.

There was one winter in 1886 that we had 3 blizzards, one came the 16th of November and the drifts of snow layed on the ground until April. We left this territory and moved to Madison county. I had lost all of my crops on my homestead and a depression and drouth which ruined me.

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The present depression is the first time the government has had to give out relief. In those days money was not needed to much as now. A dollar would go much farther then than now.

In the fall of 1899 I moved again to Norfolk and lived there. One of the early songs we used to sing in those days was "Darling I am growing old; silver thread among the gold."

We celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary in November [?]. We had 4 children. My wife died May 7, 1938.

Inventions in my time have been wonderful. If they took away all of the inventions that have been created in my time it looks as if there wouldn't be anything. Everything we used in the old days was crude and primitive.

The assassination of Lincoln caused great sorrow although we didn't know that he was dead until quite a while after it happened.

It was said that in 1840 that everything was invented that was going to be invented.

People thought that automobiles would take your breath away in those days when they first came up.